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A very rare & curious collection of
Jests and merry Tales from the Weber
Collection - I never saw, or heard
of another copy.

Edw.

Laurence Prior.

William of Wilt-shire.

His birth, Life, and Education, and strange adventures: with his unmatched Cheats, witty feats, and merry conceits; setting forth his travels, what Dangers he escaped by the help of his wits, and how he was himself Cheated of fifty pounds by a Lady of pleasure, and yet knew not whether she was a man or woman, but by her hands and face.

With merry songs and sonnets.

*You that this book shall hear or read,
and understand the same,*

*You cannot chuse but laugh indeed,
for it deserves no blame.*

*Except it be for modesty,
the which he did desire;*

*And then you will confess with me,
that herein is no lye.*

*Read and laugh, then laugh and read,
both wit and mirth it fill,*

*Read it quite o're, and ne'r give o're,
till you have laugh't your fill.*

*And if that this your palate please,
with mirth and eke with art,*

*You will oblige the Author then,
to write a second part.*

Printed for C. Passinger, next doore to the
Spur-Inn in Southwarke, 1674.

2 Every one & every collection of
the kind, being Tails, from the same
collection, must be made
of Tails, & Tails, & Tails.

WITTY
William of Wilt-shire.

His birth, Life, and Education, and strange adventures; with his unmatched Cheats, witty feats, and merry conceits; setting forth his travels, what Dangers he escap't by the help of his wits, and how he was himself Cheated of fifty pounds by a Lady of pleasure, and yet knew not whether she was a man or woman, but by her hands and face.

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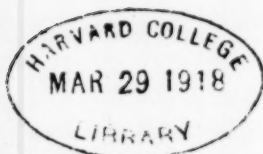
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Kittredge fund

WITTY
William of Wiltshire.

Shewing his Merry pranks, pretty Feats,
witty Cheats ; being full of Wit and
Mirth, and very delightful to read.

There was a span which had a
hopeful son by his wife, whom he
named William, and because he
had been long in Wiltshire, the
span's by name was called wilt-shire; this
stripling was put to School, and took his
Learning so well, that in short time he out-
learned many of his fellows, and became well
skild both in his Latin and Aying tongue, and
frequenting the company of Gypsies, which
did often frequent to their town, became ve-
ry eloquent in canting, insomuch that all men
admired his dexterity, in that strange and
strange language, he was well acquainted with
deceits from his childhood, and would well di-
semble an injury till he had opportunity to
abenge the same : for whilst he was yet little
he used this his excellent courage, never to
beat any less nor younger then himself, but
vent his rebenge with great ardensie against
those bigger then himself, and would defend

Witty William of Wiltshire.

the weaker and lesser sort of his fellows, from those that were too strong for them, this his deportment gained him the favour both of old and young, rich and poor.

One time in a bitter cold day he espied a boy that had lately done him an injury, stand peeping into a shallow well, he came softly behind him, & thrust him in the feet forward, that he stood up to the neck in cold water; not knowing who thrust him in, he cry'd out aloud for help, but William decembling the matter, as not knowing thereof, came with some company and drag'd him out, as dry as a d o w n e d p o a s e : William smiling, said, Thank me your God-father, for this good turn that I have done you : the boy mistaking his real meaning, said in good earnest, I thank you kindly God father, I had certainly been drowned had it not been for you.

At another time he and his Companions went for to rob an Orchard, some of which had discovered his misdemeanors to his master, which he bare in mind, they were eight in number, he sent five up into the trees to shake down apples, when he had sent the two others down away, and himself had his own share. he went immediately to the owner, and sends him into the Orchard, where

he caught the five boys in the trees, who all of them were soundly whipt the next day; unto whom he said now I am sufficiently recompensed for telling tales of me to my master, (if this doth please you tell again but after this all the boys made friendship with William.

William having oft observed a company of bacrant fellows that were counterfeiters, to lye basking in the sun in his fathers close, in the long grass under a great hedge. came by them and ask'd if they lay there all night, yea Master said they, if that we had but a little straw; well said he, come to me at night and I will give you straw, in their absence he laid a train of Gunpowder under the long grass that came quite through the hedge; Will according to his word had furnisht them with straw, for which they were very thankful; about midnight came William, when they and their dories were fast asleep, puts fire to the train, this fired the hedge and all the low trees, made all the Criples run away, most pittifully burnt in their Limbs, their crys with the great blaze of fire raised the whole town, which apprehended these strangers, who were all whipt for the fact; never since that time durst any such persons approach that town.

V Vitty William of Wiltshire.

But the foresaid William growing to 9 years of age, and so expert in all villanies, his father fearing that some great mischief would follow determined to send him to London to a friend, but whilst this was determining there came to their town a crew of Gypsies, who viewing his countenance, which was fresh and ruddy, asked him if he could speak Lattin, yea that I can said William, so he answered them partly in Lattin, and partly in Canting, which caused the chief Master for to admire his dexterity in that sort of Pedlors French, what tricks they used was unknown, but at their departure they took William away with them, with whom he continued till that he was fifteen years of age, and then returned home to his Father, both in good liking of body, and well clothed.

After this his father sent him to London, where he was bound Apprentice to a salesman, but before the year was quite out, he having found the sweetness of fingerling of Crowns, what with keeping evil Company and much drinking, he had run his Master out above an hundred pounds, for which debt he was cast into prison, where he lay a long time, till by the assistance of some friends, and the late act of Parlement he was set at liberty.

Am

Witty William of Wiltshire.

Immediately he writes both to his Father and Brother, but he received but a churlish answer, because they were ashamed both of his life and actions, and because his father had lost his moneys he put him out withall, he durst not press too hard upon their kindness and being in great distress, wanting both moneys and cloaths, he writ to a Young-man sometimes his School-fellow, a pittiful letter in these Words following.

Sir to your hands these lines I do present
beseeching you to yield your free consent
to me that with these lines doe you salute
And also grant to me one needful sute.

Imprisonment hath wrought my full decay
& all my cloaths are torn & worn away,
My hats so full of holes on every side,
That such the same my face I cannot hide.

My hatband which before I us'd to wear,
I chang'd it with the tapster for strong beer
My ribbons gay of crimson blew and red,
traist for Candleles to light me to bed.

My powder'd perriwig unto my grief,
I sold away to buy me powder beef;
My shirts so rent, so torn and tattered,
I can't devise to pul't over my head.

My scarlet waistcoat with the rits thereon
& broad gold lace are all cashir'd & gone

V Vitty *William of Wiltshire.*

My doublit that's grown very thin & bare
Like to a boan for which no worms do care
My coat & Shash I turn'd them into chink
And with the same I bought beef bread &
drink, (strange,

My doublit makes me seem a monster
As if mans habit did his nature change.

My wastbands wasted, & my sneezing tears
it, (wears it,

Quite off o'th books, just like to him that
My breethes pericots do more resemble
Then any Lawyers gown within the temple

My belly pieces still are fat I well observe,
If baked well for belly pieces serve,
My stockings they are sound as any bell,
But how to draw them on I cannot tell.

my shoos about my feet keep rouling round,
As if no stockings in them could be found,
My shoos and soles both separated are,
So that my feet upon the ground goes bare.

When I behold the gallants by me pass,
Methinks I see my self in natures glasse,
Not like the fish that sports to swim & sink
whilst I want coyn to buy me meat & drink

Nor like those fields that are both fresh
(and green,

Whilst I ashamed am for to be seen,

Nor

V Vitty William of Wiltshire.

Nor like those gardens that yields sweet
content, (rent)

Whilst all my Cloaths are both torn and
Nor like the trees that yeild delicious fruit,
For I go daily in a tattered suit,
Nor am I trim'd like Butter-flies and Bees;
For here and there a tatter I do lease.

You are my approved friend and do confess,
The only one that can my wants redress,
Remember Sir you are of friends my chief,
Turn pray you quickly, send me some relief.
So fare you well, I pray say me not nay,
Necessity admits of no delay.

So sooner had the young-man receiv'd his
Letter, but he forthwith shew'd it to William's
brother, that was his bosome friend, he
out of compassion to his brother, shew'd it to
his father, the father out of love to William
to keep him from further danger, and willing to
be a father in distress, but not to be seen in
it, least he should depend upon it, furnisht him
with these following things, caus'd the young-
man to answer his letter as followeth.

His

Witty William of Wiltshire.

His friendly answer.

THy kind salute came safely to my hand
Thy nakedness *I* plainly understand,
When *I* consider thy industrious care,
thy long confinement & extreame hard fair,
thy words and actions seem both most witty
My heart and soul upon thee taketh pittie,
My friend, thou shalt not want whilst that *I*
A life or livelihood without the grave, (have
As for the promise *I* to thee did make,
To ease thy wants that *I* would undertake,
Some few things unto thee *I* have sent,
For to cashear thy suit that's torn and rent.
A perriwig that once my self did wear,
Crisped and curl'd, all made of flaxen hair,
A beavor fair for to adorn thy head,
A golden band with fancies green and red.

Two Hollon shirts, & two half shirts beside,
With fair half sleeves that are both large
and wide, (white,

Two pair of drawers that are both clean and
Two Cravats and bands for thy delight.

A handsome suit thats of the newest fashion
To wear when that thou takest recreation,
Likewise a Casock of a comely hugh,
My loving friend now *I* have sent to you.

A riding coat to keep out rain and wind,

For

V Vitty *William of Wiltshire.*

For you to wear when you a caution find,
Two pair of stockings that of silk are made,
So dyed in grain, the colour will never fade.

Two pair of shoes with Colotious beside,
one pair of boots when you have need to ride
I have sent thee a gelding that's all white,
With all accowterments for thy delight.

A sword and belt a trusty Ornament,
To guard thy self, and dangers to prevent,
Likewise a Cain I have sent thee withal,
To stay thy self when thou art like to fall.

What else thou wantest I to thee have sent,
the which may yeild thee pleasure & content
Methinks thy hands into thy pocket go,
But thou hast not one penny for to show.

Yet for all this thou seemest full of sorrow,
Having no coyn, nor knowest not where to
(borrow,

Clear up brave spirit, cast off discontent,
By such a one ten pounds I have thee sent.

But use it wisely, spend it not in vain,
When that is gone then send for more again.
Thou shalt not want thy need for to suffice,
till death me cease, & close up both my eyes.

William being thus bzabely accomodated,
and his man at his heels, upon a gallant ge D
ing. and well apparale'd with each of them a
trusty sword, and a case of Pistols, takes up

ON

on himself the name of a countrey Squire, by which means he might the better deceiue all that he delt withal, and with what tradesman soeuer he met he pretended that he had some commodities fitting for their use, and that he delt in exchange, for many sorts of Merchandize: both himself and his span, coyned to themselves seferal names, and had their seferal changes of habits, and Perri-wiggs according to the seferal places that they came unto, they had also their seferal colour'd plaisters, or if that you please patches of spacke euer about them in a rediness, and their riding coats were made both inside and outside perfect work for two seferal coats, they were easily chan'd by turning the inner side outward.

How he served a rich Salesman.

William and his man walking through the City, where was great Roze of Salesmen, which did so ply pull, and hawt him to buy apparel, that by the Shop-keepers perswasions and his mans he went into the shop, perused of many cloaths ready made, as came to near or about an hundred pounds, pretending for his family at his countrey house, well, to the Tavern they go with all speed, where he treats the Salesman thus; Sir, I perceiue that you are willing to sell, but I question whether you be

Witty *VV*illiam of *VV*iltshire.

he as ready to buy if a man would sell you ne-
ber so good and great penniworthe. Sir said
the Salesman if you have any commodity in
my way I had as leade take Commodity as
moneys, what is it? Sir said *VV*illiam, it is
broad cloath, six quarters wide, and therewith
showed him a sample of all the several sorts,
they bargin, that if the buyer like to when he
sees it, then to take cloath, if not to have ready
money. But stay Sir, said *VV*illiam, you
know not me, neither do I know your deal-
ings, and I would not deal deceitfully with
any, nor yet receive any wrong my self, will
you except of my propositions. He said the o-
ther if I like them. Then said William I will
leave two hundred pounds in my Land-Lords
hands till my cloath comes to town if you will
deliber me the Commodities upon that condi-
on, how like you this? Well said the other, if
the Inn-keeper will secure me the moneys, I
will with all my heart, then from the Tabern
to the Inn forthwith they go together & having
treated with the Inn-keeper, he consents, then
said William bring you the Cloathing that I
have bought hither to Morrow Morning, and
you shall see the Moneys told, for I love plain
dealing. then went William to another Sales-
man of his old acquaintance, appoints him to
meet him at such a Tabern next day, at ten a
clock,

Witty William of Wiltshire.

clock, and to bring Moneys with him, and he would sell him a good pennitworth.

In the Morning came the Salesman with Porters laden with the Cloathing to the Inn where William waited for their coming, having prepared a large colation of an Angel price, where William in the presence of the Salesman, the Inn-keeper and others, poured out two hundred pounds upon the table of good and lawful Money, draws it over, puts it into the baggs again, seals it up with his own seal to prevent mistakes, lays it upon the table; asks if that be not sufficient security, according to Law, they all allow it for good: it so fell out that the Salesman went out of the room to ease himself, and the Inn-keeper to be cal'd to the dooz, then Williams Man claps down two other bags just like these first in all points both magnitude weight and seal, and away he goes to his masters chamber, then in came the other two, then said William to his man, send these goods away to be paid with the first, his Man well knowing his meaning, sent them away immediately to the place appointed, where the other was ready, and upon sight paid him his ready Money, for he had a great Pennyworth, then his Man commanded the Horses to be made ready with all speed, saying, that his Master and he must hast home to send up the

Witty William of Wiltshire.

the cloth, or else his Master would be damned
for above an hundred pounds : In the mean
while William plies the Inn-keeper and
Salesman with Wine, Tobacco, and merry
tales, till both their hearts were merry, then
delivered he the two baggs to the Inn-keeper
in the presence of the Salesman, and divers
others (who did commend him for his loyalty)
so they drank one quart of wine more, and so
parted.

How far he rid that night.

So William and his Man mounted with
all speed, and was very bountiful to the Ser-
vants of the house, and so they set forward as
to go into the countrey, but being gotten out
of sight they wheeled to the left, and took up
their quarters near Westminster, as if they
had come but then out of the Countrey, this
toot made our Bonnier very socond and
libely for that night; as he walked the street
he met with a gallant damosel, and guessing by
her habit, carriage, and answers, what she was,
he courts her to lye with him that night, she
consented for three golden angels to be his pro-
tector for that night, then they supt together,
and drank wine in abundance, so William
went into his bed, she was tedious, and made
delay in undressing her self. In the mean time
he fell fast asleep, she seeing that, took out of
his

Witty William of Wilt-shire.

his Pockets thirty pound in gold, a Watch worth fife pounds, and a Diamond Ring worth fifteen pound, in all to the value of fifty pound, and so departed, but spounſer ſlept till break of day, and then miſt his fair Lady, his Gold, his Watch, and his ring, but could not tell whether ſhe was a Man or a Woman that cheated him but by her hands and face.

where dwels the man that now can me adviſe
To find her that hath won this golden prize,
He ſwore the next & firſt he could trappan,
Not to be baukt, but prove himſelf a man,
Full vext he was for truth, as I am told,
'Cause ſhe him baukt, & ſtole away his gold.

How he was ſerv'd the next day.

As ill-gain'd Goods never thriues, ſo it
probed with William, for all the next day he
walks the ſtreets to ſee if he could ſet his eye
upon this gay Lady, but could not, but walk-
ing through the Strand he met with a beauti-
ful Woman, which he courted, ſhe yielded to
go to the Tavern with him, where they call for
a Chamber, and Fagets to make a fire: Now
ſir, ſaid ſhe, that I have condeſcended to come
to the Tavern, I pray giue me leaue to drink
what Wine I will, and as little as I pleaſe, for
I drink nothing but mul'd ſack, whiſt the ſack
was a mulling, he that knew well how to take
measure,

Witty William of Wiltshire.

measure, first took notice of her handsome foot
& leg, her licken stockings, & silk garter, with
gold & silver lace hanging down to the midleg,
then next of her smock, that was laced with a
Flanders Lace, six inches broad round about
the bottom, what with these, the vertue of sack
& the heat of the fire, set him into such a heat
that it made all people admire.

More of this I could say but I dare not,
But thought is free, think what you will and
spare not;

Being full of pain, in rage he deeply swore,
That whilst he liv'd he'd touch lace smock
no more.

He describes his last Mistress and first thus:

To be mans misery, her voice like the scritch-
ing of an Owl her eyes the peyson of a Cock-
atrice, her hands the claw of a Crocodile, her
heart the Cabinet of horror, she is the grief of
nature, reasons trouble, wits wound, abuse of
time, her pride unsupportable, her anger is un-
quenchable, she fears no coulers, nor cares for
no counsel, she is a servant, but not of good,
the tast of bitterness, the digestion of death.

Now return we to the Salesman and the
Inn-keeper.

William never sends up the cloath, the day

is past, the Salesman comes to the Inn-keep-
er and demands his money, the bag is produced
fast sealed as it was delibered, the seal is bro-
ken up before persons of note, and being pou-
red out, caused great admiration, for the sub-
stance contain'd therein, was only lead & glass
cut round, all not worth five shillings at the
most. William is not to be found, the Inn-keep-
er is arrested, and pays the money, for both the
bags prove alike.

After all this, William betakes him to his
shifts, and furnisheth himself with a fair gold
ring, having set therein a fair square Topas,
& a most excellent hatcht silver hilted Rapier,
whose point was most gloriously pullished, like
any looking-glass, both this stone and Pommel
represents whatsoever is set before them like
to a Looking-glass, then he fell to Card-play-
ing amongst great persons, putting on his ring
on his little finger on his left hand, which he
turn'd towards the pack which discovered e-
very Card that he drew what it was, at other
times he laid his rapier just cross his waste un-
der his left hand, in the pommel thereof he might
deserne every Card he drew most plainly, by
this way he won or rather cheated several per-
sons of much coyn, but he was discovered and
laid open by one who thought that is as cunning
in that art as himself, & so was catch'd that
come

Witty *William* of *Wiltshire*.

Company, and that part wherein this act was performed.

What tricks he play'd in the Country.

William being cashear'd the *Clerk*, he with his *Span* fled into the Country, having first obtained a firm Catalogue of all the names of the *Lords, Knights, & Gentlemen* in those parts, & how many miles it was betwixt every particular place, so he traveled into the countrey about an hundred miles from *London*, to a great shire town, to the greatest Inn there hires a boy to go with them some six miles to the said Inn & his groom by him. he sends back his horses to a place appointed, there he continued 3 days, spending moderately, but paying freely, and would never sit down till his host was placed at the upper end of the table, in this time his man was diligent in making inquiry what Country man the master of the House was, & from whence the tapster, chamberlain, & maids came, & what country Gent. frequented that house, and from what parts they came, then his man gives out amongst the Servants that his master was from such a place, that was far enough distant from that place, that he had so many hundred pound coming in by the year, that he came thither to sojourn a while till he could sell a parcel of Land with a stock of cattle upon it, which would amount to twenty five

V Vitty *William* of *Wiltshire*.

hundred pound at least, this report caus'd him to be honored like to a demer god.

Late in the Evening comes in a counterfeit Foot-man, delivers William his message in the great hall, so told, that all men might hear that such a knight, living ten miles from thence, must needs speak with him next day by ten of the clock because he heard he would sell his land, & forasmuch as it lay convenient for him, he would give him as much for it as any man. At this William stamps & scratches, saying; O what a rogue was I to send back my horses, his Host believing that it was a current truth, furnisht him with two horses: he promist to return again within two days at most, & would pay him what he would desire, but did not, when six days were expired they sent to the knights house, but he protest he knew no such man. By this his will his host he was defeated, Of two brave horses the Inn-keeper was cheated, (say,

There was no truth in words that he did
For he rid quite the clean contrary way.

How he released a man from prison.

So he travelled from thence to another great town, where it was his chance to pass by the Countrey Prison windows, wherein amongst many other prisoners, he found one
poo

V Vitty William of Wiltshire.

poor man that had six small Children, that did
all depend upon his honest labour, whom he
questioned, & found that he had lain their now
a long time at the sute of a hard-hearted Rich
man for twenty pounds, being bound for a
nother man, which moved him to pity & com
passion, & to try his wits how to clear the poor
man, then sent forthwith for the creditor to the
tabern, and there treated him to set the poor
man free, but could by no means prevail with
out either the ready money or sufficient secu
rity, unto which V Villiam replied, saying :
Sir I do ingeniously profess that if I had not
parted with all my money to ten pound but
yesterday for a parcel of Land that I have
bought of such a man, naming a right seller,
and the other took it for curant, I would have
paid you your money down, & the poor man
should have been my servant. So William
plyed the creditor with sack, which he lickt in
as freely as a thirsty horse doth fair water,
after eating of parched beans, till he grew as
mellow as a pair, when he saw all the Fault
honour V Villiam with the title of worshipful,
he believed him to be the same Man that he
presented. and in a merry way tells William
that if his Worship would give him a bond
of forty pounds, to pay him twenty at the next
quarter day, he would set the Prisoner free,
unto

Witty VWilliam of VViltshire.

unto which William consents, saying: I question not but that the poor man will work it out by little and a little. Then send they for the prisoner to come with a keeper, he consents to serve his new Master, a Scribe-ner is sent for, who by VWilliams instructions fast-
ned the debt wholly upon him, & clear'd the pris-
soner quite for ever from the debt, which pleas'd
the mizard well, William pays the Scribe-
ner, clears the Prison fees, permits his new
servant to go home to his Wife and Children,
biding him to be sure to come to him to his Inn
by six a clock next morning, & after William
had paid for the wine, he threw a shilling to the
drawer, and another to the maid, and so they
parted for that night.

Next morning William sends for this mi-
ser again to the same tavern, he gives him a
colation, in the intrem of time comes in a coun-
try fellow tells him that the cattle which his
Bayl y had bought to stock his new purchased
Land was come and put into the pastures and
that the Farmer that sold them and the Bay-
ly was at the Inn and furdernore that the
price of the cattle came to twenty pound more
then he had delibered his bayl ey, & that the far-
mer staid there for to receive it: then said the
Churl, Let them come hither: No such mat-
ters (says VWilliam) my servant shall be

Witty William of Wiltshire.

no fellow of mine, pox apont (says William)
I must away to such a gentleman my Cousen
to borrow twenty pounds for I love to keep
my word. That shall not need, sir said the other
if your worship please I will supply you with
20 pound upon your own bond, what is that be-
twixt you & me, the 20 pound was produced, &
bond given to be paid the next quarterday, then
says William to his man, carry this money to
my bayly to pay the farmer for his cattle, & bid
him make hast home, and make ready for my
coming, bid the hostler make ready the horses,
for I long to be gone to see what bargain of cat-
tle my man hath bought, why sir said the miser
how many hath he bought? truly sir said Wil-
liam I know no more then you do how many
head of meat he hath bought, but I am sure that
I delibered him 400 pound in good money why
then said the other, they stand you in 420 pound
yea said William, & 5 pound more, then c me
in his servingman, and said, sir if it please your
worship the horses are ready, so they drank one
merry cup more, & so parted the miser to car-
ry home his 20 pounds worth of paper, & Wil-
liam to his horse with 20 pound in silver, then
he call'd the released prisoner, & there before the
Jury he per & other persons, he discharg'd him
from his service & gave him 10 pound to carry
home to his wife, & to begin the world anew,
and so departed.

The

Witty William of Wilt-shire.

The Conclusion, To the Tane of, The clean contrary way.

William of Wiltshire was a valiant Knight,
if you will believe it you may,
For unto all men he lov'd to do right,
the clean contrary way.

Ah, the clean contrary way.

To live by cheating his heart it did thirst,
and for to go gallant and gay,
And he that's not like him he thinks is accurst,
the clean contrary way, &c.

Those that with moneys his wants have supply'd,
he at his return will them pay,
When that his worship they once more have spy'd,
the clean contrary way, &c.

No Ranter, nor Canter, could yet overthrow him,
but he shewed them very fair play,
But he that knew nothing could wifly forestow him,
the clean contrary way, &c.

When he comes to London to see the Sheriffman,
his hundred pounds then he'l pay,
The Inn-keeper shall receive it if he can,
the clean contrary way, &c.

The Lady of pleasure will bring back his gold,
if you will believe it you may,
She'l kiss and imbrace him to make him more bold,
the clean contrary way, &c.

And he will return to the gallants their guilt,
the which he hath won by foul play,
By help of the Topas Stoon, and the brave hilt,
the clean contrary way,
ah, the clean contrary way.

FINIS.

